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ABSTRACT

The influx of Eastern European immigrants during the nineteenth century in Canada elicited hostility and bigotry from the dominant population. Educators aimed for assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream of Canadian society and used the school curriculum to inculcate nationalism. Up to the 1940s and 1950s, Canadian history-education and social studies stressed the greatness of the British Empire. By the 1970s, the emphasis on chauvinism was replaced by indoctrination of minorities with middle class values. Today however, multicultural education is being supported by the federal government, and the provinces too are promoting cultural pluralism in education through programs like the Alberta People Program. As such programs are implemented, problems have arisen because the educational philosophy behind multiculturalism has not been clearly defined, study units are not based on a well-delineated theory of curriculum development, and teachers have been left out of the curriculum design. To rectify the situation, new directions in educational theory must be developed, and the role of the teacher in curriculum design must be expanded. Teachers involved in such pedagogical design must keep in mind the importance of continuity, interest, and activity. (Author/JM)

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CURRICULUMS FOR A PLURALISTIC NATION

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C. Sifton's energetic immigration policy, designed to fulfill his mission of settling "the empty west with producing farmers", was immediately censured. Spear-heading the French-Canadian attack was Henri Bourassa who charged that:

> The grossly inadequate medical examination of immigrants ... was made by inexperienced doctors for political reasons. Thus immigrants swung the population balance against the French in two ways: by their presence in the non-French bloc and inflicting the French with their diseases.[1]

When the immigrant arrived, the reaction was equally damming. As early as 1897, the editor of the Calgary Herald expressed alarm about the Galician "invasion". "Canada", he said, "was never intended to be made a dumping ground for the useless surplus population of Eastern Europe ...".[2]

And such stereotyping did not subside after initial hostility was 'vented'. To many, the influx of settlers to the West stimulated the perpetuation of bigotry and stigmatization. H. B., for example, a contributor to the Vegreville Observer, regularly and relentlessly slandered the "Ruthenians". The tenor of his articles is evident in the following comments:

> It is quite possible that English speaking generations yet unborn will come to look upon the descendents of Galician emigrants as their equals and friends; at the present time we do not so consider them. In view of

> their education, ideas, moral standards and way of life, we justly regard them as inferiors.[3]

Nor were East Europeans spared disparagement by educators. D.H.W. Foght, author of "Survey of Education in Saskatchewan" (1918), had nothing positive to say about Ruthenian schools. Equally perjorative were the comments expressed by another "reputable" educator - Robert England. In his book, The Central European Immigrant in Canada, England described the Ukrainians as the most backward of Slavs but independent and nationalistic.[4]

And yet from the time the immigrant arrived, the child was viewed as having the potential for 'redemption'. And this redemption meant nothing less than assimilation. No one was more concerned about creating a homogenous citizenry than D.J. Goggin, Superintendent of Education, who in his second report to the Council of Public Instruction claimed that,

> One of our most pressing ... problems arises from the settlement among us of so many nationalities in the block or 'colony' system. There are colonies of Swedes, Finns, Bohemians, Hungarians, Jews, Austrians, Germans, Russians, Icelanders, Mennonites, Galicians, and Doukhobors.
>
> It would be criminal to shut our eyes to the fact that this rapid increase of a foreign and relatively ignorant population is at once a challenge and an invitation to our institutions.
>
> To assimilate these races, to secure the cooperation of these alien forces, are problems demanding for

> their solution, patience, tack and tolerant but firm legislation ...
>
> Only through our schools getting an early hold of the children of these settlers can we hope to train them to live according to our social system and to understand and appreciate the institutions of the country which they are to form an integral part of.[5]

Past and Present Curriculums: An Overview

Goggin recognized that an important instrument, in the hands of those who wished to use the educational system to build a Canadian nation, was the school curriculum. The Program of Studies for the Territories in the elementary (and secondary) standards is most revealing. Subjects considered best suited for the task of developing national pride and patriotism were: History, English Literature, Geography, and other less structured subjects. For illustrative purposes, History and Geography will be discussed within this context.

History - one of the primary subjects - was conscripted to aid in the inculcation of the ideals of nationalism. Political, social, and educational leaders believed that knowledge was imperative to creating, within students, love and loyalty to the nation.[6]

> This was generally accomplished by: selecting particular events from the country's past and interpreting them in the light of 'national character'; glorifying national heroes upon whose lives the young were taught to model their own; appealing to national prejudices

> while deprecating others; or, idealizing those who have shown public love of country ...[7]

The main advantage of the courses in history, according to Goggin, was that they stimulated the child's interest in the past, developed his power to depict incidents, helped him to form ethical judgments, and developed his nationalistic sentiments. He also felt there should be a close correlation between history and geography.[8] In Goggin's view, geography was a subject that not only cultivated the students' knowledge and appreciation of their own country, province, region, or even town, but also enabled them to relate their small part of the country to larger entities such as the nation and the empire. J.M.D. Micklejohn provided Goggin with a rationale for teaching the Geography of the British Empire. In an article in the Canada Educational Monthly, Micklejohn wrote:

> The question may be asked: Why teach Geography of the British Empire separately? There are several replies and a good number of reasons. It is our empire; it has been won by labour, the courage, the self-sacrifice, the blood of our country men; and we ought to encourage in our children the consciousness that we were born into it, belong to it, and form part of it ...[9]

The approach taken to geography in the Territories was similar to that advocated by Micklejohn. "It was designed to give the student a greater knowledge of the North West, Canada, and the Empire and their relationships".[10]

The attainment of provincial status did not bring significant changes in educational objectives. As did the Territorial council, the government of the province realized that education was the most effective agency in the accomplishment of assimilation. Hence, it took upon itself the responsibility for this work and plans for carrying it out. In the report of 1906 the deputy-minister wrote:

> One of the most satisfactory and hopeful features of the past year is the progress made and interest maintained in the organization and maintenance of schools among the foreign elements, especially in the Ruthenian colony east and north-east of Edmonton. Mr. Robert Fletcher with headquarters at Wostok devotes his whole time to the work, giving every possible assistance to the non-English settlers in the establishment of school districts, the erection of schools, the employment of teachers, as well as routine work connected with the levying of taxes.[11]

From Fletcher's report in 1911 we get an idea of the success which attended his work.

> The organization of school districts in the large Ruthenian colony north and east of Edmonton has been practically completed during the year. The Ruthenians have been fairly generous in furnishings and equipping their schools. I notice a decided change in the people in their ability for self-government. At firt the rate-

> payers were loath to delegate the government of the district to a board of trustees.[12]

Fletcher's success was typical of similar accomplishments throughout the province.

Regarding curriculum, the continuity of educational developments was not disrupted by the establishment of the province. As did political, economic, and social developments, curriculum in Alberta evolved with changing conditions - albeit, at a more moderate pace. And since the economic and socio-cultural scene did not change too dramatically with the turn of the century, no changes were introduced in the 1905 course of studies. Further, the concerns of social, political, educational, and religious leaders were much the same as those that were expressed by key individuals of the Territorial period. This, too, tended to support the adoption of the Territorial program - a program that was purportedly designed to meet the challenges and needs of a frontier society.

That the fundamental objective of the curriculum - to transmit dominant cultural patterns - remained relatively constant for the next three decades is evident in an analysis of the content of The Canadian Reader series. In these readers heroes are portrayed as 'national patriots' who were ever willing to lay their lives down for 'king and country'. No one typifies such a character better than Lord Macaulay's 'Horatius' - extracted from the "Lays of Ancient Rome". That this is not an isolated example is evidenced by the fact that Book V alone contains approximately twenty-seven selections about themes such as the glories of the British Empire, the character of the British and the true north strong and free, and the universal virtue of unquestioning loyalty to one's country.

Nor did the basic orientation of the curriculum change in the forties and fifties. For example, continuing into this period emphasis in the grade eight social studies (history) was placed on inculcating an appreciation for the "greatness" of the British Empire. The preface of Part I in the textbook, Our Empire and Its Neighbors, illustrates this point.

> The British Empire is the largest single community under one government in the world. It covers about one-fourth of the land surface of the earth; ... The vast majority of its inhabitants are governed from London, and thus it follows that when a new British prime minister takes office, the direction of affairs for a large portion of humanity is changed.
>
> There is British territory in every continent and along every ocean; no other nation controls such a curious jumble of peoples and lands.
>
> .....
>
> They have been acquired mainly by sea-power wielded - as might be expected - by sea-faring islanders.[13]

Following this preamble is an exposition about the development of the British Empire and the important role it plays in the 'contemporary' world.

In literature a similar bias is reflected. Of the 127 selections included in Life and Literature, Book II, 54 were written by British authors. Given the fact that the nationality of 36 contributors was

not traceable, the preponderance of British writers is blatantly evident. And even if the selected prose and poetry selections placed less emphasis on "producing loyal subjects of the Empire", they continued to reaffirm the virtues of patriotism and Anglo-American ethics.

As a consequence of a variety of socio-economic, intellectual, and political factors there is much less emphasis placed on transmitting chauvinistic principles in the curriculums of the seventies. Loyalty to the "crown" and British Empire, fire-brand nationalism and patriotism are ideals that, to a large extent, have been replaced by the secular ethics of the dominant Anglo-American cultural pattern - more accurately, middle-class values. Examples of these abound in the primary through junior high readers. A few will be cited.

In the grade two reader, A Dog Next Door, suburbia families have household pets that receive an inordinate amount of attention. Even young children demonstrate the success of transference of affection to animals.

> "What are you going to do with that ... umbrella?"
> William asked.
> "I have decided to let Stanley (a dog) have it",
> she said. "He can have the ... umbrella for his
> own - his very own".[14]

Covert expression of middle class traits are again found in the first story of Thrust, a grade seven reader. Reference to self-reliance and independence is made in a story about a middle-class homemaker who seeks self-fulfillment as a mystery novelist. Other selections in this reader stress the significance of other middle class patterns.

Multicultural Education: An Assessment

> I have visited in England one of those models of Gothic architecture which the hand of genius guided by an unerring faith, has moulded into a harmonious whole. This cathedral is made of marble, oak and granite. It is the image of the nation I would to see Canada Become. For here I want the marble to remain marble, the granite to remain granite, the oak to remain oak and out of all these elements I would build a nation great among the nations of the world.
>
> Sir Wilfred Laurier

Laurier's visionary aspirations assumed political reality on October 8th, 1971 when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau officially sanctioned multiculturalism. Thus, in Trudeau's own words,

> National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deep personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's individual identity; ... A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society that is based on fair play to all.[15]

Pursuant to this announcement, the federal government implemented instruments to further multiculturalism. Prominent among these are The Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism and the composite program of grants offered by the Department of the Secretary

of State to voluntary organizations and community-backed groups or individuals.

Provincial Departments of Education were equally enthusiastic and diligent in promoting cultural pluralism via their courses of studies - particularly through their social studies curriculums. Note, for example, the significance given to this theme in Alberta's latest social studies guide:

> The objectives of the 1978 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum, Interim Edition, assume that carefully selected learning experiences related to inquiry into significant social issues will help students develop sensitivity to their human and natural environments, intellectual independence, moral maturity, and effective participation in community affairs. These characteristics are believed necessary for constructive community, Canadian, and world citizenship in the coming decades.[16]

The scope and sequence of the topics for Division One through Four are conducive to the achievement of the above objectives and concomitantly, to creative and constructive unit planning. Supplementing this opportunity for ingenuity is the allocation of one quarter of the total class time to inquiry into social issues that exist in the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the community - issues that are selected by teachers, students, and community.

Paralleling the interest and efforts of the federal and provincial

authorities is the work done by or in association with local school boards. The "Alberta People Program", "Mosaic Project", and "Native Studies Project" are typical examples of multicultural enterprises initiated at the local level. A brief overview and assessment of selected involvement at the local level in Alberta Follows. It is assumed that such involvement, with all their negative and positive features, is typical of local participation in Western Canada.

The multicultural orientation of the Alberta People Program is an accurate reflection of the aims of school boards' efforts in this area. The objectives referred to are cited below:

1. to provide a cross-cultural base which can promote the study of cultures.
2. to make students aware of the contributions that native and ethnocultural groups make to Alberta.
3. to increase the student's degree of self-awareness and thereby develop a positive self-image ...
4. to promote an understanding and respect for individual and group beliefs and values by encouraging students to explore their own cultural traditions and social customs as well as those of others.[17]

At the instructional level, a Social Studies unit with a multicultural perspective was prepared by a local committee for Grade I students for use in the new Social Studies Curriculum. A number of deficiencies characterize this unit. First, like the provincial

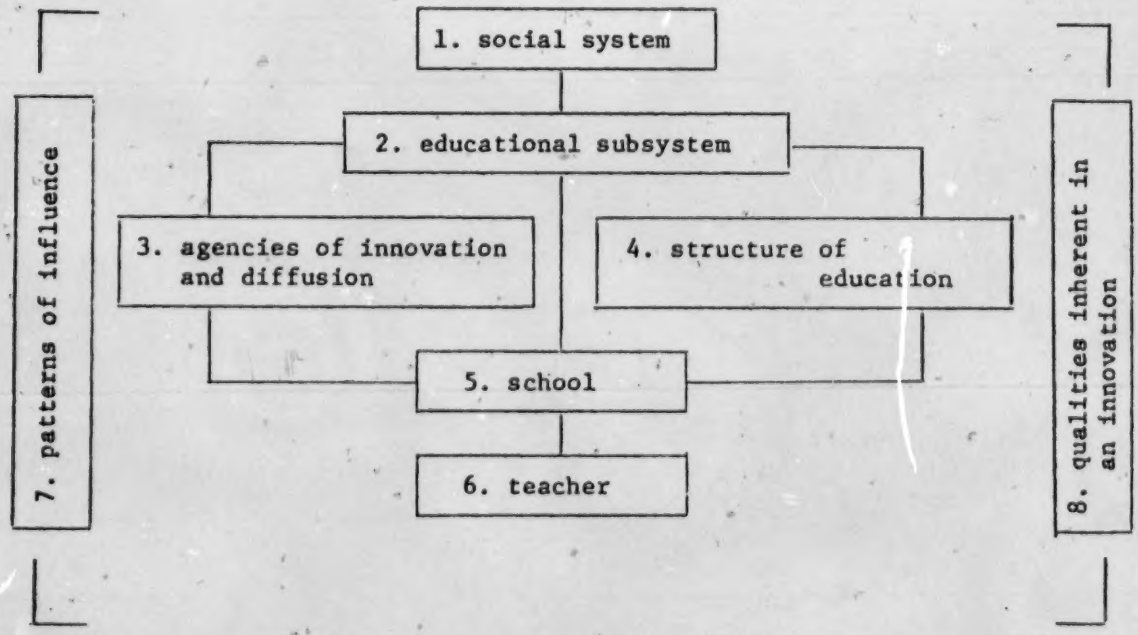
Social Studies guide, it was not designed within the matrices of an explicitly defined educational philosophy. Like their provincial counterparts, the local committee became engrossed in specifics related to value objectives, knowledge objectives, and skill objectives and failed to define an educational theory that would facilitate constructive and creative confrontation of the whole new series of problems that have emerged in our society. No one has expressed the need for such a dynamic approach to educational philosophy better than did W.H. Kilpatrick in his lecture, "The Changed Education". The appropriate passage is cited below.

> The new school must be an essentially different school from the old. It will cost more money, not primarily for buildings or equipment, but for the men and women who are to use building and equipment. Costly buildings ... are easily got; but the needed type of ... teacher is harder to get. It is ... brains and education and character that we most need and must have. And for getting these a change of philosophy appears to be our only hope ... a better philosophy that will free education from its thraldom and allow it unhampered to do its real work.[18]

Second, it is evident that the local committee did not outline the unit according to a defined theory of curriculum development. It makes sense that curriculum planners should, in their work, explicitly indicate an understanding of the relationship between socio-economic

change and curriculum change, the determinants of long term evolutionary change in the curriculum, and the cumulative and/or cyclical nature of curriculum change. Regardless as to whether their responsibilities are the preparation of a course guide for a discipline or a single unit, the concerns of the curriculum designers should be broad ranging from the large scale to the small scale, the evolutionary and the planned, the past and the present. A useful model for examining the different levels of analyses and patterns of interaction, developed by Eric Hoyle, is presented below:

A SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF CURRICULUM CHANGE



Third, it has long been conceded (though never implemented) that in the final analysis the real course of study must come to the child from the teacher. Elaboration of this issue is found in Dewey's work, The Educational Situation. Some relevant excerpts follow:

> I have already alluded to the fact that at present the teacher is hardly enabled to get a glimpse of the educative process as a whole, and accordingly is reduced to adding together the various external bits into which the unity is broken. We get exactly the same result when we consider the way in which the course of study is determined. The fact that this is (basically) fixed ..., by a power outside the teacher in the class room who alone can make that course of study a living reality, is a fact too obvious to be concealed. As long as the teacher, who is after all the only real educator in the school system, has no definite and authoritative position in shaping the course of study, that is likely to remain an external thing to be externally applied to the child.[19]

The negative aspects, noted in the foregoing assessment, are sufficiently serious to undermine successful implementation of "multicultural education". But the situation is not hopeless. Consideration of the observations and suggestions detailed in the following section should do much to facilitate the development of a viable curriculum for a pluralistic nation.

Observations and Suggestions Re: Developing and Implementing Curriculums for a Pluralistic Nation

Successful operationalization of any recommendation is contingent upon the acceptance of its underlying rational and a commitment to its basic objectives by all of those involved in its implementation. Given

the fact that in 1971, 44.6% of the Canadian population was of British extraction, 28.7% of French extraction, and that the remaining 27.5% could trace their ethnic extraction to thirty other countries, the need for educational reconstruction that would encompass multicultural dimensions seems self-evident. However, though significant numbers of Canadians are aware of the richness of cultural diversity and accept it as part of their identity, a sizeable proportion of Canadians either do not meet these standards or accept them with qualifications. On this issue John Kehoe, in Ethnic Prejudice and the Role of the School, reports the following:

> A careful analysis of the various surveys suggest that a majority of Canadians are supportive of multiculturalism but there are limits to what they will accept. Although a majority of Canadians approve of public multicultural programmes, almost fifty percent of the same sample said that if members of ethnic groups want to keep their own culture they should keep it to themselves and not bother other people in the country.[20]

Such attitudes seriously impede the opportunity to realize the optimal benefits of the Canadian cultural diversity. To accomplish this, it is crucial that we see cultural and individual differences not as problems but things which must be nourished. The challenge to leaders in education is clear.

The challenge, however, demands more than successful prosetylization. Positive implementation of multicultural education requires objectives

developed within the framework of a clearly articulated philosophy of education. And this philosophy must move away from preoccupation with theories generated to meet conditions for another society. As Archambault states,

> We should store up the gains that have accrued, but move on to the real educational problems that now confront us as a result of the gains that ... (previous philosophies) provided.[21]

New directions in educational theory must be developed if the whole new series of problems that have emerged in our multicultural state are to be creatively and constructively confronted.

And these "new directions" need, as their focal point, some ideal, some model for all to strive toward and emulate. M.V.C. Jeffries eloquently expresses this need:

> The question which is always brought forward 'To where, to what, must we educate?' - misunderstands the situation. Only times which know a figure of general validity - the Christian, the gentleman, the citizen - know an answer to that question, ..., by pointing ... to the figure which rises clear in the air, out-topping all. The forming of this figure in all individuals, out of all materials, is the formation of a 'culture'.[23]

The figure which should be elevated "clear in the air, out-topping all" in our society, is the figure who manifests the attributes specified in the objectives of multicultural programs. To create this

figure, to elevate it for all to see, is the task of the pedagogues, the administrators, the media, and all others affiliated with the educational enterprise.

Only after these vital preliminaries are defined should multicultural curriculum development proceed. And, as with all curriculums, such work should be done by those who are directly and experientially involved in the educational process. When a department of education, a school board, a superintendent, or a special committee lay out a course of study down to the point of stating the exact shapes to be reproduced in a drawing, or mention the exact recipes to be followed in cooking, then " ... the experience of the ... teacher who makes the connections between these things and the life of the child will receive (only) incidental attention in laying out these courses".[23] When the teacher has no definite voice in curriculum design, there is, as Dewey stated:

> ... No motive for interest, of a thoroughly vital and alert sort, in questions of the intrinsic value of the subject matter and its adaptation to the needs of child growth.[24]

Expanding on the same theme - that the real course of study come to the child from the teacher - Dewey continues:

> What gets to the child is dependent upon what is in the mind and consciousness of the teacher, and upon the way it is in his mind. It is through the teacher that the value even of what is contained in the text-book is

> brought home to the child; just in the degree in which the teacher's understanding of the material of the lessons is vital, adequate, and comprehensive, will that material come to the child in the same form; in the degree in which the teacher's understanding is mechanical, superficial, and restricted, the child's appreciation will be correspondingly limited and perverted. ... It is obviously futile to plan ... expansions of studies of the curriculum apart from the education of the teacher.[25]

In response to those that maintain that the classroom teacher is not sufficiently entrusted to "shape a course of study", Dewey, justifiably, waved the fundamental question - "... the question of democracy - whether the needed education can be secured without giving more responsibility even to the comparatively uneducated".[26] It should also be noted that such objection suggests another fundamental condition in our school procedure - "the question of the status of the teacher as regards selection and appointment".[27]

As part of Deweyan theory generated to meet the conditions of another society, the foregoing tenets are now subject to extensive criticism. And this is legitimate. Dewey, at the turn of the century, did not foresee an atomic age which, with all its promised goodness, also accentuated the anxiety of young people. Nor did he foresee the emergence of problems currently indigenous to Canadians as they proceed with their multicultural venture. So, though we should store up the

gains we have accrued from Dewey's theories, we have to move away from obsession with them. Applying this precept to the issue of curriculum development, it is significant to bear in mind his reminder that each school needs to understand the uniqueness of its students and create a proper educational program for that school and in that time. At the same time, it is essential to recognize that such a complex responsibility requires extensive specialized consultative services. Further, to develop a curriculum that would facilitate the realization of a viable and dynamic Canadian mosaic, universal guidlines need to be formulated and continuously re-examined by personnel whose standard of judgment is unclouded by emotive interactional processes.

Also paramount is that teachers involved in curriculum design keep in mind such basic pedagogical and methodological principles as continuity, interest, and activity. Attention to these principles avoids breaks in experience which may hamper or frustrate a child's intellectual life. The progressive strategy of starting with the familiar - e.g. the family - and then extending the student's experiences to ever-broadening horizons until the child is ready for specialized projects in academic disciplines, is ideal for incorporating "multicultural education" into the social studies program so that it would be an integral part of the curriculum. Such an approach is particularly viable in a society as diverse as ours. Equally important is the need to integrate reading, language, literature, music, and art as part of the social studies units so that the study and subsequent appreciation of ethnic/racial/religious contributions to our mosaic are not presented as appendages or 'carnivals' but genuinely integrated dimensions of an educational process. Only after such strategies are seriously considered, defined, and implemented could we even begin to hope to offer our youth an education that is truly multicultural.

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